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A system interface includes a plurality of first directors, a plurality of second directors, a data transfer section and a message network. The data transfer section includes a cache memory. The cache memory is coupled to the plurality of first and second directors. The messaging network operates independently of the data transfer section and such network is coupled to the plurality of first directors and the plurality of second directors. The first and second directors control data transfer between the first directors and the second directors in response to messages passing between the first directors and the second directors through the messaging network to facilitate data transfer between first directors and the second directors. The data passes through the cache memory in the data transfer section. A method for operating a data storage system adapted to transfer data between a host computer/server and a bank of disk drives. The method includes transferring messages through a messaging network with the data being transferred between the host computer/server and the bank of disk drives through a cache memory, such message network being independent of the cache memory.